

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

April 6, 2011

Protect Our Streams from Mining Wastes

Cosponsor the Clean Water Protection Act, H.R. 1375

Dear Colleague:

Congressman Frank Pallone has reintroduced the Clean Water Protection Act (H.R. 1375) to protect our nation's waterways and promote economic growth in American coal country. I hope you will join us as proud cosponsors of this critical legislation.

We need to recognize the important role that coal currently plays in our national energy portfolio. However, we must also work to strike a balance between protecting our environment and promoting economic growth in the future. We feel that H.R. 1375, the Clean Water Protection Act, does both.

H.R. 1375 prohibits the dumping of waste from mountaintop removal coal mines into our precious rivers and streams. This waste contains dozens of heavy metals and chemicals such as arsenic, lead, mercury, and selenium. Tap water in many local communities runs orange and even black from these "valley fills", jeopardizing the health of the people in this region.

H.R. 1375 would not only end water pollution from mining waste, but would also help to revitalize mining communities like those in Appalachia. Mountaintop removal coal mining results in a tremendous loss of traditional underground coal mining jobs, which are critical to coal bearing regions of our country. It also leaves local communities with little ability to diversify their economy and seek new industrial investment, given the pervasive damage that this activity often creates in the local environment.

To date, at least one million acres of Appalachia's mountains have been leveled by mountaintop removal mining. More than 500 mountains have been flattened by this process, and nearly 2,000 miles of streams are buried and destroyed by the dumping of mountaintop removal waste. If Congress does not intervene, we will lose even more of Appalachia's vibrant communities and culture, long-term economic growth potential, natural beauty, and abundant ecological resources and services.

As members in search of commonsense solutions that balance environmental and economic needs, we ask that you strongly consider cosponsoring H.R. 1375, the Clean Water Protection Act. For more information, please contact Ryan Fitzpatrick in the office of Rep. Heath Shuler (5-6401) or ryan.fitzpatrick@mail.house.gov.

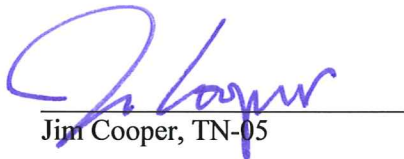
Sincerely,



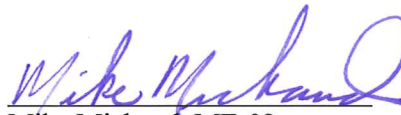
Heath Shuler, NC-11



Ben Chandler, KY-06



Jim Cooper, TN-05



Mike Michaud, ME-02